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## What Role for the South in the Coming Election?

Moderator, QUINCY HOWE

*Speakers*

DORIS FLEESON

GROVER C. HALL, JR.



—April 29, 1952—

**THE LISTENER TALKS BACK**

on

**"Do We Want a Military Man in the  
White House?"**

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VOL. 18

No. 1



## What Role for the South in the Coming Election?

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The account of the meeting reported in this Bulletin was transcribed from recording made of the actual broadcast and represents the exact content of the meeting as nearly as such mechanism permits. The publishers and printer are not responsible for the statements of the speakers or the points of views presented.

### THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**DORIS FLEESON**—Political columnist of the Bell Syndicate from Washington, D.C., syndicated in 70 cities. Born in Sterling, Kansas; she graduated from Kansas University, and in 1927 was working for the *New York Daily News*. About the time of the New Deal she was assigned to Washington, the only woman to cover page one politics for a metropolitan daily and to travel with the President. Miss Fleson was twice winner of the New York's Women's Club award for outstanding reporting. As the first war correspondent for any women's magazine, she covered World War II for the *Woman's Home Companion* in 1943-44. Since 1945 she has been writing five articles a week for the Bell Syndicate. In 1951 she was given the Distinguished Service award for Notable Achievement in the Field of Journalism by the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

**GROVER CLEVELAND HALL, JR.**—Editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. One of a family of journalists ("the most numerous newspaper clan in Alabama"), Grover C. Hall, Jr., was born in Montgomery, Alabama, 37 years ago. He has always lived in the South except for a four-year stint with the Army. Mr. Hall became editor of the morning daily *Advertiser* in 1947, succeeding his father who in 1928 received a Pulitzer Prize for the best editorial writing of the year "for his editorials . . . against gangism, floggings, and racial and religious intolerance." Four members of the Hall family have been members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, a society record. The *Advertiser*, published continuously for 124 years, has been called Alabama's foremost political organ.

**Moderator: QUINCY HOWE**—Associate Professor of Journalism, University of Illinois.

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# What Role for the South in the Coming Election?

## Announcer:

Tonight Town Meeting originates from the Music Hall in Houston, Texas, as a feature of the annual Lecture Series of the University of St. Thomas. Coöperating with the university is the Second National Bank, Town Meeting's regular Tuesday night sponsor on station KXYZ.

The University of St. Thomas opened its doors in September, 1947, under the direction of the Basilian Fathers, and last June graduated its first class. The university is coeducational, offering a course in liberal arts, and it enjoys the highest rating with the State Department of Education. Faculty members represent leading American and European seats of learning. Town Hall salutes the University of St. Thomas for its rapid progress and its contribution to Houston's position as one of the leading educational centers in the South.

Now to preside as Moderator for tonight's discussion, here is the noted author, news analyst, and Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Illinois, Quincy Howe.

## Moderator Howe:

Good evening, friends. The presidential primary in which Florida Democratic voters are taking part today puts tonight's Town Meeting on top of the news. Two Southern Senators—Russell of Georgia and Kefauver of Tennessee—have both put on strong campaigns in Florida. But what chance would Kefauver have in one of the other Southern states? If Russell wins Florida, how would he do in the North?

What chance has Taft or Eisenhower to break the Solid South?

These are some of the questions you will hear discussed on tonight's Town Meeting which comes to you from the Music Hall of the beautiful Civic Center of Houston, Texas, where guests of the University of St. Thomas, which was founded in 1947 under the direction of the Basilian Fathers, and our audience of students from St. Thomas and Houston citizens will question our two speakers, Miss Doris Fleeson, who writes a Washington column that the Bell Syndicate distributes five times a week to Sunday newspapers throughout the country, and Grover Cleveland Hall, Jr., Alabama born and bred, Editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*.

First, though, let's hear from our two speakers, and I'm going to ask Miss Fleeson to start things off by stating what role she thinks the South should play in this 1952 election.

**Miss Fleeson:** Mr. Howe, there is an old rule I've always tried to obey which says, "Never insult the host until he has paid the check."

I don't want to insult the people who selected this topic, but I can only say that it seems to me a rather strange topic indeed. What role *should* the South play in the coming election except the role that every American state should play in the coming election, which is to select the best president who can help us in our fight for survival against Russia? (*Applause*)

**Mr. Howe:** Mr. Hall, would you have anything further to add to that, as a Southerner yourself?



**Mr. Hall:** Contrarily, Miss Flee-son, I think that the subject is well chosen, inasmuch as the whole country looks to the South as a rather eccentric and picturesque area of the country where they have the one-party system. It's supposed to be beyond the reach of any change and I think we have an opportunity of a lifetime this year to do something about that, and I think we can play a very powerful part in the affairs of this Republic at this time. I think we may even hold the balance of power.

**Mr. Howe:** Well, when you speak of a two-party system, wouldn't that require General Eisenhower to be the candidate of the Republicans to make any real inroads in the South, Mr. Hall?

**Mr. Hall:** In my view I believe that Senator Taft leaves the Southern people about as flat as Tom Dewey did in 1944. (*Cries of dissent*) Contrarily, and I call your attention to the very dramatic political events which have been occurring right here in Harris County over the week end in the Republican Conventions, I think that Dwight Eisenhower can make a very powerful showing in the Southern states in November.

**Mr. Howe:** That isn't so exceptional. Miss Flee-son, isn't that just your point, that this is rather typical of the whole country?

**Miss Flee-son:** I think it's part of a wave that's sweeping the whole country. Mr. Hall seems to think that the role the South can play is to seize the Eisenhower banner and carry it triumphantly from East to West and North to South in advance of General Eisenhower's return and his telling us in person what exactly he intends to stand for as a candidate.

I think he's giving the American people, including the people of the South, a rather large order when he asks them to do so much—rather sight unseen or ear unheard—as their candidate, or his candidate, as yet.

I have to smile a little bit when Mr. Hall says that he thinks it's time for the South to play a part in our affairs, because I'm a Washington correspondent and my observations of the past years—more than I care to count—have been that the South in coalition with the Republicans has been playing a dominant role in Congress. I don't altogether approve.

**Mr. Hall:** I certainly don't want to labor that point about the coalition between the Democrats and the Republicans in Congress but this is an opportunity, if the Republican party will nominate Eisenhower, to initiate this two party system. The South, I think or at least large parts of it—certainly Texas and some other state that might be named—will support Eisenhower over any visible Democratic nominee. I think it's the place to begin; I think this the year to do it. I think possible—although I wouldn't say this with too much assurance, because the Democratic party is still very powerful in its appeal to the people—but I think that possibly the Democratic party may be ready to blow up somewhat like the Whig party did in the other century. However, I don't want to predict that—I simply want to raise the possibility of it. I think Eisenhower is the one man who might prove that the Solid South is just a crest through which he can thrust a lance.

**Mr. Howe:** But isn't that, Miss Flee-son, more or less just another variation of the same argument that you hear from Eisenhower

supporters generally, that he is the only man who can preserve the two-party system in the United States? Isn't that the same thing?

**Miss Fleeson:** Well, in order to put it more bluntly and more simply, he's the only man who can run against the Democrats. I doubt very seriously the idea that the Democrats are ready to collapse. I think they have a program with a great appeal, and I think that's precisely the reason why people are afraid that unless they get a new face and a popular hero, Republicans can't win. There is an argument to be made, of course, for a change of administration in Washington, particularly in the corruption issue. There are a great many serious people who think that there should be a change. But this business of a "wonder man" in politics who will change the course of history and who should be followed blindly—I won't subscribe to that theory.

**Mr. Howe:** Well, why do the Southerners stick to the Democrats they have, Mr. Hall? Why is there this problem? Doesn't that justify your side of the argument?

**Mr. Hall:** You mean the historical leaders?

**Mr. Howe:** Right now why is considered such a terrific thing that the Southerners do choose to vote Republican?

**Mr. Hall:** Because they've got to break a tradition handed down from generation to generation. It goes back to the Civil War, and these voting habits are very persistent and they are very hard to break. People are not always rational about them. There's something about that name "Republican" to a Southerner that is hard to shake, but when you say "Eisenhower," somehow that's nullified. I don't know how, but it is.

**Miss Fleeson:** Well, you know I think that your Southern politicians for a long time have sort of used "Republicans" and "civil rights" in the same way that dictators use "foreign wars" in the threat of outside aggression. They're doing it to keep themselves in power by raising the specter of this awful enemy that would come in.

Now I agree that Eisenhower is riding a crest right now, but I think that the economic and social revolution of the last twenty years have created conditions on which he capitalizes, and if those conditions will continue, they make inevitable a two-party system in the South, whether Eisenhower stands or falls. I point to the migration of the Negro to the North, to the rapid industrialization of the South, which certainly you see in Alabama and all around you in Houston, of all places, to the growing middle class which is a more independent group of voters than any other. Aren't we getting a two-party system through those social and economic changes in the South, Mr. Hall, in spite of whether we have a wonder man or not? Your own state sends Liberals to the Senate. Two of the most liberal senators in the Senate.

**Mr. Hall:** Well, I might add by way of contradiction that we've elected a Governor who labels himself a conservative, and I don't think you can draw too many conclusions from that. He calls himself a conservative and spells it out. It's quite a contradiction.

**Miss Fleeson:** What did your paper say about Alabama's delegation to the National Convention?

**Mr. Hall:** In what respect?

**Miss Fleeson:** The candidate they intended to support?

**Mr. Hall:** I said that Senator Kefauver apparently had made a successful raid on Senator Russell in Alabama, very much to my surprise, and I think that is probably true.

**Miss Fleeson:** And Senator Kefauver has made the appeal in the South, he made it in Florida—I heard him make it—that the fact is that he is a Southerner and proud of it but that the United States should not elect a sectional candidate. The North should not vote for a Northerner because he's a Northerner, or the South for a Southerner because he's a Southerner, but that Americans should vote for an American president who can handle the present world crisis.

**Mr. Hall:** Well, Miss Fleeson, reverting to your other point there about the fact that the two-party system is very likely to come from these forces that you have mentioned, I agree with that altogether. The Southern states are in the process of that change, and it's coming. But here is an opportunity as I see it in Texas, as I see it in my own home state of Alabama, to usher this new millennium in a good deal ahead of schedule.

**Mr. Howe:** There is a point that Samuel Lubell makes in a new book of his on the future of American politics, where he says that the South is going to go more Republican with the rise of the middle class in the South, that Miss Fleeson was speaking of a minute ago. What do you think of that on your Republicans for Eisenhower, or for Taft, for that matter? Would the rising middle class of the South maybe vote Republican rather than Democratic?

**Mr. Hall:** Well, there is cer-

tainly an economic clash in the Southern states that should normally be Republican. For example, my home county, Montgomery County, Alabama. I've often said it in the paper and I believe it fully that the people are conservative there, and by all the rules of viewpoint, those people should be Republicans. As it turns out, they've been Democrats, of course. Historically, it's the cradle of the Confederacy, but that's in the process of change.

For example, this very day the kind of thing you've seen happening in Texas with respect to Senator Taft and General Eisenhower, right here in this county, must have happened to some extent in the Montgomery County Court House. I don't know how the show came off, but the Eisenhower people, composed of ex-Democrats seeking a new home, were to have moved in on a Republican show there which was bent towards Senator Taft. How that came out, whether it was carried off as successfully as it has been carried off throughout the length and the breadth of Texas over the weekend, I couldn't say.

**Miss Fleeson:** I'm going to dispute Mr. Hall on the millennium coming with the two-party system. I don't believe that's going to quite create the millennium. I think what those two parties do and whom they nominate will have a good deal to do with that.

I wasn't quite aware that this was going to turn into a kind of Eisenhower rally. Of course, I'm not an editor, I'm the working press, and I'm not taking sides in this contest for one candidate or another. It seems to me, Mr. Hall, that when you talk about what General Eisenhower can do for the South, you haven't mentioned that issue which sets the South aside in



its own mind or in the minds of those politicians—they say it does and I don't entirely agree with them, I think they overspeak themselves to the people—and that is the civil rights issue. You don't anticipate that General Eisenhower will take a position different from the historical Republican position on that issue, do you?

**Mr. Hall:** Well, Miss Fleeson, I don't propose to speak for the General, but I think it's implicit in what he said before, if not explicit, that he would be opposed to any sort of compulsory FEPC legislation which would put a federal cop in as executive vice-president of every inter-state business in this country. I don't believe he would ever sign such a bill as President.

**Miss Fleeson:** As a practical matter, when do you anticipate that bill will be passed, as long as the Southerners filibuster a cloture rule? Don't you think it would be nice if we could have a debate on the merits of these proposals, for a change, after seven years, instead of just having a filibuster on the subject of whether or not the cloture rule means one thing or another? Don't you think the American people and the American Senate and Congress could be trusted to debate issues?

**Mr. Hall:** Well, Miss Fleeson, like yourself, I think that there has been a very elaborate debate on that subject ever since 1861. I think it's been in constant process. I know that we passed some civil rights bills in the 1870's, and it's been a continuous proposition right on down to the present.

**Miss Fleeson:** You think conditions have changed a little bit since 1870, don't you, Mr. Hall?

**Mr. Hall:** I'm mildly aware of that fact.

**Miss Fleeson:** I sometimes wonder, when I hear some of this talk of federal trooper in every home, forcing you to sit down in church, and so on, I sometimes wonder if people in the South who insist upon forcing that argument out to the fore, are aware of how much conditions have changed. I myself believe that a solution can be reached on the civil rights question by men of good will, not by politicians in the North or politicians in the South, who want to use it for political advantage.

**Mr. Hall:** Well, now, Senator Russell, who happens to be the leading Southern spokesman on civil rights, is disposed to accept some sort of compromise in which you would have a voluntary FEPC, but not in a compulsory sense. Senator Russell has a further qualification which I am sure Miss Fleeson would find meritorious, that not only would everybody be protected, regardless of his race and so on, but that would extend to protection against discrimination against men past forty who are very much discriminated against in employment, and also against women.

**Miss Fleeson:** I wasn't aware that the South had come out in this gallant manner to protect the rights of women, Mr. Hall, but I'm awfully glad.

**Mr. Hall:** Miss Fleeson, I never saw anybody who needed less protection than you do.

**Miss Fleeson:** Well, even so, there are minorities in this country who do need protection and do need to have their rights affirmed and restated. It is not a Southern problem, it is not even a national problem. It is an international problem for a United States that wants to be a leader in world affairs, a leader of a world

which contains so many people of color.

But I think, Mr. Hall, that we're getting a little off the beam here. As a practical matter, when the South plays this role that Mr. Hall envisages, I come back to the point, is it possible that General Eisenhower, as the candidate, would depart from the historical position of the Republican party?

**Mr. Hall:** Well, as I've said I can't imagine Eisenhower as president signing a compulsory FEPC Bill. I simply cannot do it. You remember his testimony before one of the Congressional Committees about that with respect to segregation in the army and so on. Now I don't wish to seem hipped on that part of the subject. My concern chiefly there would exist, all apart from any question of the colored man in the South. I simply think that the FEPC would create a monster bureaucracy. You've got some of that now, and that's just some more federalism gone mad. I think it's a very bad principle. I think we're making fine progress all over the country, although the race conditions, discrimination, probably exists not in the Southern states, but in the land of the civil rights Holy Rollers, which is north of the Mason-Dixon Line. (*Applause*)

**Miss Fleeson:** Mr. Hall, it is perfectly remarkable to me that Mr. Hall can spend so much time and eloquence in this discussion of the role that the South shall play, at one of the most critical periods in our history, on one small piece of legislation. I say that the South should play the role of getting the best president we've had so that we can win the peace or win a war if we are attacked. To pin the argument down constantly to what FEPC will or will not do—and as a

practical matter, having covered the Congress for so many years, the day that bill is passed seems slightly remote to me, and I think to you—it seems to me ridiculous, and it's not paying proper respect to the political maturity of the South to say that the South in the year 1952 is going to vote for president on the issue of an FEPC bill, when we are in the situation we are, and with the world threat of communism.

**Mr. Hall:** If anybody said that, it wasn't I.

**Miss Fleeson:** I don't think the South is going to do that. I think the South is very glad. It seems obvious that it's very glad. I said in a piece I wrote that the withdrawal of President Truman seemed to have paralyzed the muscles that produced the rebel yell, because I didn't hear it in Florida anywhere. I think the withdrawal of President Truman removed the focus of the emotional feeling about that issue, and I think most people realize it. I think Senator Russell and Senator Kefauver in their campaigns largely recognized in Florida that there were more important issues facing the American people that the Southerners would help to decide as Americans.

**Mr. Howe:** How do you feel about that, Mr. Hall?

**Mr. Hall:** Well, moving on to this area which Miss Fleeson considers contaminated, I'm prepared to move on to the larger question of Eisenhower's fitness with respect to the other things you have mentioned. For example, our troubles with Russia, and that's precisely our fundamental calculation. Of course, that's the paramount thing. That's the paramount thing in everybody's mind, or should be. I think that in the case of Eisenhower, and I believe the South-



ern people think that he has incomparable equipment, both in the field of diplomacy and the military. I think there is no other candidate for president who has his unique qualifications along that line.

**Mr. Howe:** Well, getting back to this matter of the South. Is the South, Mr. Hall, do you feel, as aware, as alert, as any other part of the country, say, perhaps, more than my own middle west, to this threat of communism and our problems abroad?

**Mr. Hall:** Well, it's well known that the eastern seaboard has always been very alive to any sort of foreign threat. For example, books were written during the other war about the South, the fighting South, for example, by John Temple Graves. The Southern people are very belligerent about it, and much ahead, I think,

of most of the rest of the country on that.

**Miss Fleeson:** I'm beginning to think that Mr. Hall is glad to welcome General Eisenhower to the arena to offer an excuse for the South to forget about FEPC and vote on these other issues.

**Mr. Howe:** Well, I think perhaps we've come to the time now in our discussion when we might turn to some of the questions from the floor. We've had a patient and rather enthusiastic audience out here giving you people a lot of applause. Now let's hear from this audience itself and see what questions they have to ask to Miss Fleeson and to Mr. Hall, and those questions don't have to be answered by only one. They'll be answered first by the person to whom the question is addressed and then the other person on the panel here, can also answer as well.



## QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

**Man:** Miss Fleeson, has Mr. Harriman been talked of enough that the pulse of the South can be felt on his acceptance or rejection?

**Miss Fleeson:** I would think not.

**Mr. Howe:** The answer was negative to Harriman rather than toward the South.

**Miss Fleeson:** Very negative to Mr. Harriman. I respect Averell Harriman greatly as a public servant. I can't believe in his political appeal.

**Mr. Hall:** I don't think he's made much of an impression one way or the other. Certainly not in my part of the country.

**Man:** There seems to be quite a bit of talk at the present time in our office, and the circle that I

happen to be in. I was just wondering what the general feeling might be.

**Mr. Howe:** How do you feel about that, Mr. Hall, in respect to Mr. Harriman? This gentleman feels that there is more or less talk about Harriman as a possibility.

**Mr. Hall:** Well, I didn't mean to suggest that he had been ignored, but I do not think that they have thought about him, for example, with the same intentness that they have thought about Senator Kefauver. I don't think he's sunk in, so to speak, as yet.

**Miss Fleeson:** He has no following, in my opinion, no public following. I think he's the hold-

ing corporation for the New York votes until they find out where that band wagon is. You know New York is really in a sad state. When the years roll around and they haven't got a candidate for president, they feel pretty outdone. They're very gloomy. My Kansas and your Texas are licking them on Eisenhower.

*Man:* Mr. Hall, what can the people of Texas do when the precinct conventions vote for Eisenhower, yet we understand the professional politicians will pledge the Texas delegates to Taft?

*Mr. Hall:* You have quite a problem on that, and there is nothing unique about it. That's probably going to be typical in all the South this year. We've had stories in the paper repeatedly about the Taft Republicans, who are in charge of the organization, holding these quickie conventions in parked automobiles, kitchens, laboratories, any small place. The only thing to do is to fight on, and although you certainly are running into that trouble, I don't think any rational person could question the sentiment here in Texas. Miss Fleeson was downtown today. She covered it and I'm sure she'd bear me out on that.

*Miss Fleeson:* It was a very thrilling show today. It was a tribute to our system that these people would go to such hard work, because it's hard work to stand in those packed halls and watch and wait. It was wonderful to see, and personally I don't believe the politicians, whose occupational disease is timidity anyway, that if the people would really speak up strongly and boldly they'll dare contradict them.

*Mr. Howe:* I think for the benefit of that unimportant part of the United States which doesn't live

in Texas, we should have a little explanation about what this issue was the other day. I wonder if you could give it to us, Mr. Hall. Do you know this Eisenhower-Taft fight and so on?

*Mr. Hall:* I'm not too familiar about that. Miss Fleeson, as a leg man and a working newspaper-woman, was downtown today in Houston at some of these meetings, and I rely entirely for my instruction on her columns, and I haven't seen her column for tomorrow.

*Miss Fleeson:* Well, the problem is the cumbersome primary in Texas, which requires that the nominations go through first the precinct convention, then the county convention, and then the state convention. And in a southern state where for many years the Republican party has been a kind of a private club to which a few select people belonged who got the federal patronage when Republicans were in power, this got to be settled down into just a few organization people who ran it to suit themselves. But what has happened, and very excitingly over the week end at the precinct meetings, was that the Eisenhower people turned out in great numbers and repeatedly swamped the precinct convention.

The high spot for me is the unfortunate state of Mr. Zweifel, the Republican National Committeeman and State Chairman for Taft, who invited a few chosen friends to his home for a polite meeting at which they would endorse Senator Taft, and one hundred determined Eisenhower advocates descended upon Mr. Zweifel's home, the meeting was forced out to the sidewalk, and Mr. Zweifel even had to bolt his own sidewalk, because he was outnumbered by the Eisenhower people.

*Mr. Hall:* Miss Fleeson, are you now agreeing with me that Texans like Ike?

*Miss Fleeson:* I never did dispute that. I still say that his election will depend in very great part on what Mr. Eisenhower says for himself after he returns the first of June, and I'm sure you agree with that.

*Mr. Hall:* I think there is no question but what he will speak out very fully and in even a truculent fashion. However, I don't think he necessarily has to do it to be elected. However, I think he's the kind of man who would feel it his duty to do so.

*Miss Fleeson:* I've got a present for Mr. Hall. It's a book called *The True Believer*; Mr. Hall, you will listen to what General Eisenhower says, won't you?

*Mr. Hall:* Miss Fleeson, I will do anything you tell me to do.

*Mr. Howe:* Spoken like a Southern gentleman. Now let's have a question for Miss Fleeson.

*Man:* Miss Fleeson, I'd like to know if in November the Democrats put up Kefauver and the Republicans put up Taft, whether you believe Taft could split the South against Kefauver?

*Miss Fleeson:* I would doubt it. I think that Senator Kefauver, once nominated, would be an effective campaigner, and would do very well in all parts of the United States.

*Mr. Howe:* The Gallup Poll sustains you on that, incidentally, Miss Fleeson. As you probably know, the Gallup poll showed 49 percent of the popular vote for Kefauver, 41 percent for Taft. That was what the Gallup poll showed on a nationwide basis.

*Miss Fleeson:* It's a rather interesting thing to me that so many

people downrate Senator Kefauver in view of his performances. I went to his meeting. I was impressed with the number of young people who came to hear him, just as I was impressed with the number of young people at the Republican meeting today for Eisenhower, and there were a great many women at Kefauver's meetings who, I'm sure, look upon him as a champion of honesty in government. I don't believe he's an inconsiderable candidate.

*Mr. Howe:* Mr. Hall, you wanted to say something on this Kefauver-Taft possibility.

*Mr. Hall:* I was just going to make the generalization that, to employ a famous phrase of Henry Watterson, I think for the Republicans to nominate Taft would be to march through a slaughterhouse into an open grave, and they ought to be tired of being a carcass the day after election by this time. (*Applause*)

*Man:* Mr. Hall, have you reached this position so favorable to General Eisenhower because you, like so many people today, know so little for what he stands?

*Mr. Hall:* I think that's very far from being the case in a demonstrable way. For example, he was President of Columbia University for about two years, and in the course of that time he made many speeches all over this country, a great many of them, I believe in Texas; and in the course of those he drew his philosophy in a rather full way, so much so that it's been possible to make an entire book out of his views, almost, on specific issues, not the third paragraph of the Taft-Hartley Act, and so on, but certainly if you want to get the philosophical direction of the man without any question. It's been running serially in most



newspapers, I daresay it's been run here, but nobody could say he's unfamiliar with Eisenhower's viewpoint because the most important thing of all is foreign policy. It's obvious from Eisenhower's duty in Europe, as a leader of the North Atlantic Pact, where he stands on that. That's the chief thing, and for the rest of it you can pick it up. It's all in there to read.

*Mr. Howe:* Let the questioner have another word.

*Man:* Professor Henry Steele Commager was in town two weeks ago and he was asked the question over at the University of Houston: "What do you think of General Eisenhower as an administrator, since you were professor at Columbia University while he was President?" and Henry Steele Commager spoke up and said: "He was there so infrequently that we hardly knew him, and certainly we couldn't judge him as an administrator or otherwise."

*Mr. Hall:* That will wow Miss Fleeson.

*Miss Fleeson:* Well, oddly enough, I think that that's a fair statement. Of course, I think Henry Steele Commager is one of the great historians of our country. I think we didn't learn it at Columbia. He wasn't there very much and he didn't take a very active part, but we did see him perform in Europe, and as a leader of the most diverse army that was ever pulled together. I think the great argument for General Eisenhower is that he appears to be a natural leader that men will follow of all shades of opinion. (*Applause*)

I think that he has no liabilities in people who are bitterly against him as Mr. Truman has, and as Senator Taft has, and were I Mr. Hall, I would not worry so much

about what piece of legislation he was for or whether he was for the third paragraph in the Civil Rights legislation. I would dwell upon the fact that he could unify the country and give us the fresh start, some fresh faces, clean house in Washington, give us some new tasks that would release our energies and get us off this dime of talking about what we're all against. Let's talk about what we're for. (*Applause*)

*Lady:* Miss Fleeson, what do you think is responsible for the failure of the Democratic candidates to create a band wagon situation, such as the Republicans have now, seemingly, particularly—I'll make it more specific—why is it that Senator Kefauver has not been able to excite the Democrats?

*Miss Fleeson:* Well, the Democrats have been so long in power. They've had a very long tenure of twenty years, and as you know, Mr. Roosevelt did not encourage any other mighty oaks to grow nearby, and Mr. Truman didn't either, in the course of his making up his mind whether he would run again or not, and naturally there is a hiatus there, and the Democrats are reduced to very much younger candidates who don't impress people, in my opinion, with the maturity and the experience that some of the Republicans do.

*Lady:* Mr. Hall, in your opinion, will the coming election tend to start the South thinking along the two-party system even in state and county elections?

*Mr. Hall:* I'm sorry to say I do not, for very obvious reasons. I think that if Eisenhower was nominated, he would get, I don't know how many Southern states he might carry, but certainly he would break into the Solid South; but on the state level, the county

level, I see no prospect of a two-party system for some time to come for an obvious reason. All of the good people, for example, in this county who aspire to hold county office are Democrats. They know that all the business is going to be conducted under the Democratic tent for a long time to come. They all know the penalty of bolting a party for an officeholder, so for that reason I don't see any prospect of a county level Republican party for some time, but this would be the beginning. That's where it would have to start on the presidential level.

*Man:* Miss Fleeson, if nominated by the Republicans this summer, do you think the South would support General Eisenhower either solidly or just in a few states, as was done in the case of Herbert Hoover in 1928?

*Miss Fleeson:* It looks very much now as if there is a groundswell for General Eisenhower. I think much will depend on who the Democrats nominate and on the kind of campaign made by General Eisenhower and the Democratic nominee. Don't forget, we may have a business recession by fall, and when people start thinking about their economic self-interest, a lot of other considerations fade in the background.

*Man:* Mr. Hall, do you think the South has a strong presidential candidate since it has been revealed that Kefauver has constantly voted pro-communist?

*Mr. Hall:* I'm not aware that Senator Kefauver has voted in that fashion. Although I'm no admirer of him, I regard him more or less as a hot rod, there is no question of any sort of divergence of that kind.

*Man:* Is it not true that he voted

against continuing the un-American Activities?

*Mr. Hall:* Well, I am not aware of his specific vote on that issue, but basically he has been an internationalist who has voted to appropriate all the funds with which the Truman Administration has been winning the cold war against Russia.

*Man:* Miss Fleeson, if the South had two great political parties, namely, Democratic and Republican, would our elections make our race question more important?

*Miss Fleeson:* Well, I know that theory is raised, I can't believe it, no. No, I think they would tend to an even division, and the question would plague both parties. You think they would bid for the Negro vote?

*Man:* It's a very real problem for the South and we've got to face it. They've had it for a great many years and they'll have it after the New Deal is dead and gone.

*Mr. Howe:* How do you feel, Mr. Hall?

*Mr. Hall:* Obviously, it is inevitable, and I am sure that all enlightened Southerners regard it in that light, that the colored man in the South is going to have all of his proper civil rights, such as the ballot, the right to serve on juries, and so on. That's taking place gradually beyond any doubt. This very moment, it is estimated, that we've got 900,000 Negro voters in this country. That grows about as fast as they go and qualify. Now I know that many stories are circulated that they are repressed, and this and that, but the fact is the chief reason they don't vote in larger numbers is they simply don't go and qualify. That's been my experience in Montgomery.

*Miss Fleeson:* I think we can't hold back the great tides of history anyway. I think we have to believe in ourselves and in our cause and in our Democratic system and we can work these problems out.

*Mr. Howe:* Thank you ever so much, Miss Fleeson. I'm sorry our time is up, and we've got to bring this discussion to a close. Miss Doris Fleeson and Grover C. Hall, Jr., thank you for all the sharp and discerning observations you've

made on tonight's topic, and on behalf of Town Hall, let me also express thanks to Town Meeting's Houston hosts for their splendid and fine cooperation, their hospitality, Father Hugh Haffey of the University of St. Thomas, Mr. Hugh J. Bernard, and his associates of the Second National Bank, the regular Tuesday night sponsor of Town Meeting, and Ted Hills and Ken Bagwell of station KXYZ. So plan to be with us next week and every week at the sound of the Crier's Bell.

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## FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

### Background Questions

1. How solid is the "solid South"?
  - a. Is the South primarily Democratic or primarily anti-civil rights legislation?
  - b. Is the South's stand on states' rights its way of avoiding civil rights legislation?
  - c. Does the "solidity" of the South this year depend on what kind of civil rights platform is endorsed by the Democratic Convention?
  - d. Does President Truman's announcement that he will not be a candidate for re-election preclude a split in the Democratic party? Does it guarantee that the South's electoral votes will all go to the Democratic candidate?
  - e. As more Negroes vote in the South, will the South become more or less Democratic?
  - f. What future for the "Dixiecrats"?
2. How much influence does the Southern electoral vote have on the outcome of presidential elections?
  - a. Can a candidate be elected President without any Southern support, or does the South hold the balance of power?!
  - b. If the Southern vote is necessary for victory, would or should the Democrats modify their civil rights platform to a degree which would be acceptable to the South?
3. Is the historical issue of the Civil War as strong an influence on Southern political thinking as it has been in the past?
  - a. Is a two-party South desirable? Is it possible?
4. Is a realignment of political parties needed?
  - a. Are Southern Democrats ideologically closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?



# THE LISTENER TALKS BACK

on

"DO WE WANT A MILITARY MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE?"

Program of April 29, 1952

## Speakers

Chester Wilmot

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.



Sir:

"Was Yalta Stalin's Greatest Victory?" was an exceptionally good and informative discussion and I want to keep it for my reference information . . . when some of my friends start criticizing Roosevelt and others for "selling out to Russia at Yalta." Most of them couldn't tell you any of the terms or when it was or where Yalta is or anything else except that they disapprove and they blame it for all our difficulties with Russia and for the Korean War. —DOROTHY D. DYSART, Centralia, Washington.

Sir:

Certainly it appears that Yalta was Stalin's greatest victory because he gained so many concessions while giving little in return. One of these concessions concerned Poland (whose) territory and sovereignty were sacrificed to Stalin. . . . Was it because the Polish nation is too near Russia and too far away from allied interests to be of direct concern? . . . This is the sordidness of international politics with its spheres of influence and its lack of justice for small nations.

Then take the case of tiny Korea. The United States interfered there to halt the spread of "dangerous" Communism, while at Yalta it was "friendly" Communism—or so it seems.—EDMUND KUDLICKI, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Sir:

In all that is fair and just, why have a very highly intelligent Englishman—but who after all does not know all the workings of our government—debate with a hundred per cent F.D.R. man? Why didn't you have an equally staunch Republican to debate with Mr. Schlesinger? —IMOGENE L. BOSCH, Evanston, Illinois.

Sir:

No doubt you may receive complaints that you did not choose a *complete* "anti-Yaltaite." To the degree this was true I believe it proves you are, as your program states, trying to get the facts and let the listeners make up their minds. Two sharply opposed fanatics brawling over a subject get newspaper and magazine space, even higher Hooper ratings. Somehow, though, I doubt their ability to get at the facts.—MARY CAROL SPILLMAN, New York, New York.



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